Committee on
Homeland Security **Democrats**
Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member

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Statement of Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Hearing of the Subcommittee on Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Cybersecurity Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Science, and Technology

"SCADA and the Terrorist Threat: Protecting the Nation's Critical Control Systems"

"SCADA systems perform vital functions in running much of our industrial and critical infrastructure processes. As technology continues to develop, this country will become more reliant on computerized control systems to perform these vital monitoring functions. It is imperative that the Congress and this Administration act quickly to solve the serious security problems that plague SCADA and control systems.

"The possibilities of a terrorist breaching a SCADA system are incredibly frightening. Nuclear power plants---like the one located in Port Gibson, Mississippi, in my District---can potentially be at risk. Electric grids, water management systems, and oil and gas control systems are also all at risk. Attacks can result in unquantifiable losses of infrastructure, money, and lives.
The risks to control systems posed by a natural disaster, like Hurricane Katrina, must also be considered. The hurricane shut down the electrical grid along the Gulf Coast, thereby forcing two critical pipelines to shut down.

"We're all still paying at the gas pump partially because of that failure. We spent the time, money, and energy building our critical infrastructure systems; we must now spend the time, money, and energy to protect them. As you all know, protecting SCADA and control systems requires a commitment from two entities. The private sector must continue to identify current security risks, modify and adopt new encryption standards, and create new technologies to secure future systems. It's also important for us here in Congress to determine what role the federal government should play. Should we provide incentives for SCADA systems to comply with best practices? Should we establish new guidelines for existing SCADA systems? Should we use the leverage the federal government has when buying SCADA systems for itself in order to create changes across the market?

"In terms of current federal efforts, I am particularly concerned about what the National Cyber Security Division at DHS is doing right now. I also want to hear more about what the NCSD is doing to help DHS complete the cyber security portions of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan. A final version of the NIPP was due last December. As of today, we are still waiting for it."

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